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LESSON LEARNED

School Emergency Planning: Developing Disaster Preparedness Resources for Schools

SUMMARY

The New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management developed *What's the Plan Stan?*, an emergency preparedness program for all New Zealand schools. The program helps teachers to develop lessons that educate students about disasters and promote preparedness.

DESCRIPTION

Residents of New Zealand are vulnerable to many different types of disasters that can threaten life, property, infrastructure, and livelihoods. The Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management developed a disaster preparedness teaching resource in the 1980s and realized that disaster preparedness resources for teachers needed to be updated. As a result, the Ministry made safe communities a priority and decided to make a major investment in civil preparedness. In 2005 and 2006, the Ministry received \$6.1 million (New Zealand) to fund national public education initiatives relating to disaster preparedness. To achieve this goal, the Ministry developed several public education initiatives for children and their families, including the *What's the Plan Stan?* program.

New Zealand has a population of 4,252,277 and a total land area of 267,710 square kilometers. New Zealand's landscape is primarily mountainous with large coastal areas.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management developed *What's the Plan Stan?* to assist teachers in educating schoolchildren between the ages of 7 and 12 about disaster preparedness. The program's Web site contains resources that students and their families can utilize to assist in their household's disaster preparedness efforts. Ministry officials believe that if students have a better understanding of disaster preparedness, they will share the information with their parents and families. This disaster preparedness information may also prompt the students' communities to be better prepared. The Ministry developed *What's the Plan Stan?* in 2006 and released a revised version of the program in 2009.

Federal Emergency Management Agency Region I launched Student Tools for Emergency Planning during the 2008–2009 academic year. This program is similar to New Zealand's *What's the Plan Stan?*. For more information, refer to *Lessons Learned Information Sharing Good Story*, [Federal Emergency Management Agency Region I's Student Tools for Emergency Planning Program](#).

What's the Plan Stan? helps students learn how to prepare for six incidents:

- Earthquakes;
- Floods;
- Man-made disasters;
- Storms;
- Tsunamis; and
- Volcanic eruptions.



What's the Plan Stan? Logo

CHARACTERS AND DISASTER SCENARIOS

The *What's the Plan Stan?* program is designed around five young friends and a dog named Stan as they prepare for and cope with New Zealand's most frequent disasters. The Ministry developed characters that are the same age as the schoolchildren who would utilize the Web site as a way to help children relate to these characters.

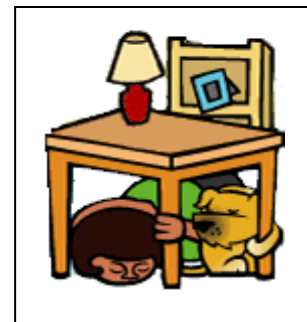
RESOURCES

The *What's the Plan Stan?* Web site provides teachers with numerous resources:

- Teacher's guide, unit plan, inquiry model, and templates;
- Disaster activities and fact sheets;
- Simulation and practice activities;
- Disaster stories; and
- CD-ROM.

The *What's the Plan Stan?* Web site includes a variety of practice scenarios as well as historical and up-to-date disaster information.

The Web site is consistent with the New Zealand national school curriculum and reflects current New Zealand emergency preparedness best practices. Additionally, the Web site includes a version of the resources in Te Reo Māori, the official language of the indigenous people of New Zealand.



What's the Plan Stan? Earthquake Logo

Teacher's Guide, Unit Plans, Inquiry Model, and Templates

What's the Plan Stan? provides teachers with a teacher's guide, unit plans, an inquiry model, and templates for classroom use. The unit plans provide information on the values and key competencies that students should learn from the unit. Subject matter from *What's the Plan Stan?* is designed so that teachers can incorporate health and physical education, social sciences, science, and English subject areas into the unit plans. Each learning area identifies achievement objectives, learning intentions, assessment criteria suggestions, and activities to help guide teachers as they utilize the unit plans. These plans are designed to be taught over a 4- to 10-week period.

The Web site includes three separate unit plans for schoolchildren geared toward ages 7 and 8, 9 and 10, and 11 and 12. In addition, the Web site provides additional educational templates and discussion ideas that teachers can use for all ages. Teachers can access the unit plans and templates as PDFs or Microsoft® Word documents.



What's the Plan Stan? Flood Logo

What's the Plan Stan? Stories

What's the Plan Stan? includes disaster stories that describe Stan and his friends coping with the six types of disasters. Each story includes a checklist of steps to take before, during, and after a disaster. In addition, the stories include a quiz to test students' knowledge. Five of the six disaster stories are also available in an audio file. Teachers can use these audio versions as part of the unit plans. In addition, the files are useful for children who are still learning to read.

The stories are written at a level that is appropriate for the students learning about the related curriculum area. The stories are animated, and the pictures provide illustrations of the disaster as well as the protective actions that are recommended in each story.



What's the Plan Stan? Storm Logo

Disaster Activities and Fact Sheets

The Web site includes disaster activities and fact sheets that can be implemented with the unit plans or used as separate lessons. Activities within these resources include class discussions, map drawing to facilitate the identification of safe and dangerous areas within the school, and the creation of disaster response plans. The activities and fact sheets can also be used as homework assignments for students. These assignments encourage students to discuss the information in *What's the Plan Stan?* with their families, which can prompt parents and families to prepare for disasters.

Simulation and Practice Activities

What's the Plan Stan? includes simulation and practice activities that promote preparedness among students and their families. These activities include emergency response practices, an evacuation exercise, and disaster simulations. The activities can help familiarize students with the protective actions to take during a disaster that could occur in their region. Teachers can incorporate these activities into their lesson plans. The Web site provides additional templates and scenarios that can be used by individual classes or the entire school.

The simulation and practice activities include a school-wide evacuation exercise. This exercise can help familiarize parents and guardians with the procedures that take place when a school is evacuated. The evacuation exercise also helps test the school's ability to quickly and safely evacuate all students, teachers, and staff. These practices and simulations can help schools identify their strengths and weaknesses in order to make improvements before a disaster strikes.



What's the Plan Stan? Volcano Logo

What's the Plan Stan? CD-ROM

The *What's the Plan Stan?* Web site provides a link that teachers can access to download the entire set of resources available on the Web site in CD-ROM format. The CD-ROM can be downloaded to a computer directly from the Web site. Teachers and students can use this CD-ROM to access the disaster preparedness resources without Internet access.

CITATION

New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, What's the Plan Stan?.
<http://www.whatstheplanstan.govt.nz/>

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